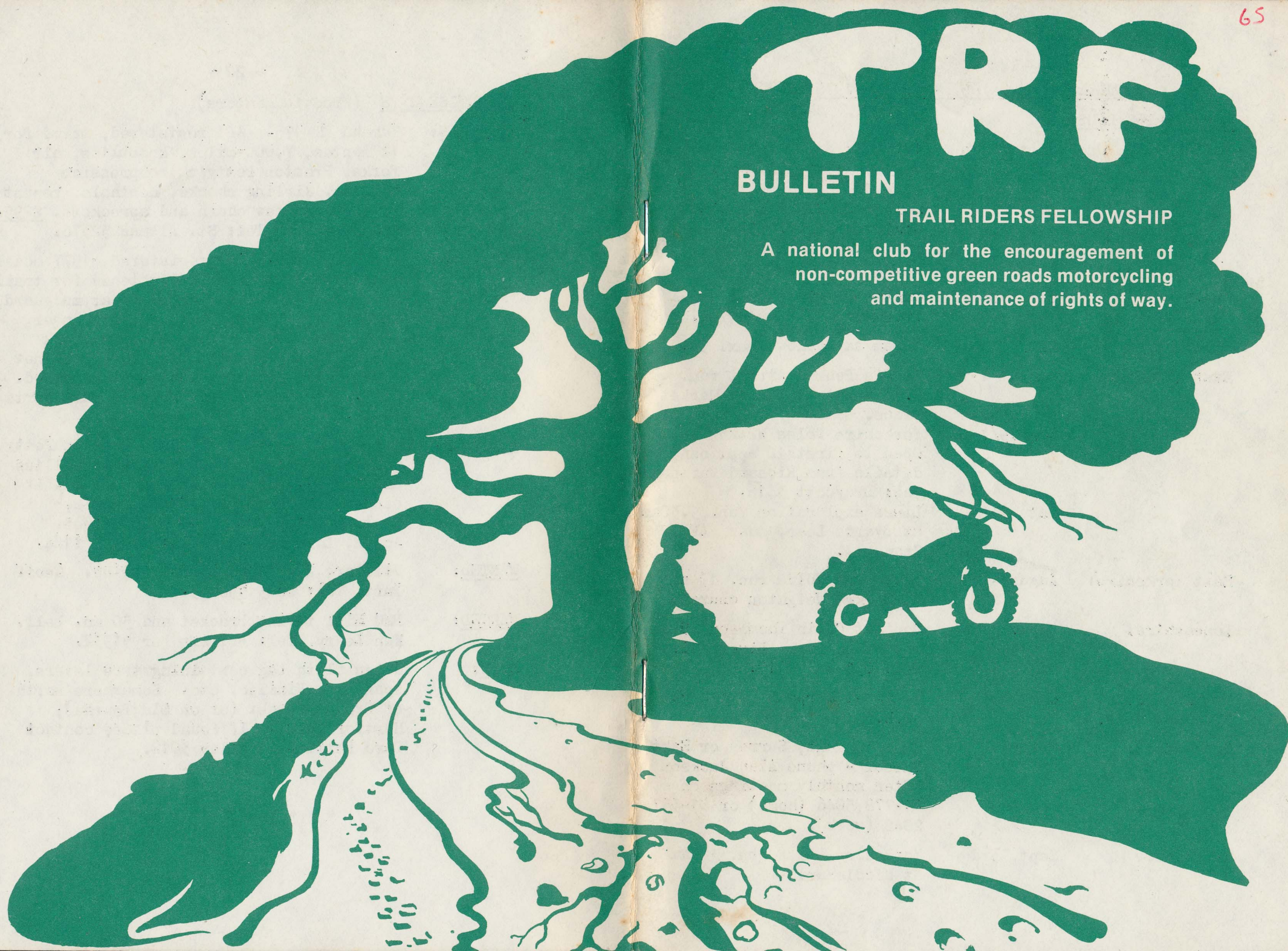


# TRE

## BULLETIN

### TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

A national club for the encouragement of  
non-competitive green roads motorcycling  
and maintenance of rights of way.





BULLETIN NO. 65 - JULY 1978/AUGUST 1978

FORTHCOMING RUNS

Bristol:	Sept. 24th	10.30 am at the Chepstow lay-by, just off Junc. 22 on M.4.
	Oct. 22nd	Salisbury Plain run with Southern Group. 10.30 am in the car park of the Crown at Everleigh.
Cheshire:	Oct. 1st	Contact David Eaton, 125 Victoria Rd., Northwich.
Derbyshire:	Oct. 8th	10 am at Baslow, max. 30.
East Midlands:	August 13th	Staffs Peak District run. 9.30 am at Ashbourne Market Place.
	Sept. 9/10th	Yorkshire Dales Weekend. Open to first 12 applicants; details from Richard Marshall tel: Draycott 3416.
	Oct. 15th	Lincs exploration run. 9.30am at Byards Leap, near RAF Cranwell.
East Yorkshire:	August 26th	Yorkshire Wolds run. 10 am at Market Weighton church.
Lancashire:	Sept. 17th	Contact Colin Thompson, 9 Breckside Park, Liverpool. Tel: 051-263 3510.
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear:	Oct. 15th	10 am at Morpeth centre car park.
South East:	Monthly	Runs in Kent, Surrey or East Sussex - phone Alan Jackson after monthly meetings on 01-778 5046 (home) or 01-357 2048 (work).
Teesside:	Sept. 3rd	Yorkshire Dales run. 10 am at Middleham.

FORTHCOMING RUNS

Teesside:	Oct. 8th	Wykeham Forest run. 10 am at Ruston.
Thames Valley:	August 27th	10 am at the Little Chef on A33 just north of Junc. 11 on M4.
	Sept. 24th	Pillion passenger and novices run. 10 am at the Seven Stars pub, Knowle Hill, on A4, 4-miles west of Maidenhead.

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EDITORIAL GUBBINS

We still have no National Parks Officer in the TRF - a very necessary job if we want to stay with it on the persecution front. I think there are several TRF members who are retired - how about one of you? You are really in the best position to do the job.

Re Brian Thompson's letter to the Ed. I agree with him about the friction-free committee meetings. Since Bruce Roberts became National Secretary all the meetings I have attended have been cordial and efficient. The Executive Committee is certainly not in disarray.

The fact that this Bulletin is marked July is editorial license!

Nick Walker.

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EDITOR & DISTRIBUTOR:

Nick Walker,  
13 Central Avenue,  
Hounslow,  
Middx.

SECRETARY:

Bruce Roberts,  
15 Castle Drive,  
Bakewell,  
Derbyshire.

Bulletin contributions deadline - about the middle of the month, please.

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### INDOOR MEETINGS

- Anglia: 4th Thursday - White Lion, Sible Hedingham.
- Bristol: 2nd Monday - Dog Inn, Old Sodbury, 1-mile east of Chipping Sodbury.
- Cheshire: 1st Thursday - Robin Hood, Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport.
- Derbyshire: 2nd Monday - Hare & Hounds, Nursery St., Sheffield.
- Devon and Cornwall: Every Friday - Pig & Whistle, Little Hempstone, near Totnes.
- East Midlands: 2nd Wednesday - Flying Horse, Kegworth, on A6.
- Essex: Every Tuesday - Warley Sports Centre, Warley Gap, nr. Brentwood.
- Lancashire: 1st Tuesday - Eagle & Child, Church Road, Leyland.
- Southern: 3rd Tuesday - Fountain Head, Brook Street, Winchester.
- South East: 2nd Tuesday - White Swan, Crayford, Kent.
- South Midlands: 1st Thursday - Valiant Trooper, Aldbury, near Tring, Herts.
- Teesside: 1st & 3rd Fridays - Station Hotel, Stokesley,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile south on Kirby road.
- Thames Valley: 3rd Monday - District Arms, Woodthorpe Rd., Ashford, Middx.
- West Midlands: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays - King George V Memorial Hall, Hockley Heath, Solihull.

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### GROUP NEWS

DERBYSHIRE: Rep - Brian Thompson, 39 Warren Road, Thorne, Doncaster, Yorks. Tel: 0405 814388.

This is the last Group report from me. I have been Group Secretary for nearly nine years, but with the Rights of Way work nationally and locally now taking up all of my time, I am unable to devote time and energy to develop the Group. We seem to be sticking around the 20 mark for members attending; this is small compared with some groups.

Ian Dunsire has agreed to take over as Secretary and I am confident that the group will benefit. We already have a minutes secretary - Peter Butterley. All enquiries on runs and group activities to Ian in future. Ian's address is: 1 Lodge Drive, Harley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire. S62 7UW.

Rights of Way for Derbyshire I continue to do, and try to keep pace with the paper mine in Bakewell. South Yorkshire RoW is shared out between Ian, Nigel Heath and myself, and we are indeed fortunate that South Yorks C.C. are pro trail riding. The group should really be called the Derbyshire and South Yorkshire Group as all its members live on the borders in South Yorks.

We discussed the enduro question and took a vote as to whether an Enduro Section would be good or bad for the TRF. 8 to 2 said good, with 5 not paying attention, 3 at the bar and 1 on the bog. We do not take this issue very seriously, and no one has the slightest interest in organising enduros. John, our refugee from the south, is chief argument provoker and more power to his voice box. Keeps it lively. John thinks we have a fuddy-duddy image that fails to attract the younger riders. Could be right! The big disappointment to me is that the TRF membership has not kept pace with the growth of trail riding. Why?



Gerald Smith has volunteered (never volunteer lad, they said in the Army!) to look at the lanes mentioned in last month's Bulletin. Everyone enjoyed the film show, thanks to Pete Stefanski. The meeting was held at the Manchester Hotel because the Hare & Hounds was closed for the hols. Back to the H & H next month. Scouts are seeking more suitable pub accommodation, the H & H is a bit smelly!

This Group is the host for the AGM. Let Ian know if you wish to ride on the Saturday, plenty of room for all..... Cheerio.

\* \* \* \* \*

DEVON & CORNWALL: Rep - Geoff Burt - NEW ADDRESS:  
2 Colley End Park, Paignton, Devon.  
Tel: 0803 558093.

This past month has brought us celebrated company. Seymour Moss arrived at the Pig unannounced to swap tales of glorious Essex (where?) with expatriates Joe and Richard Hustwayte, and to sample local Blackawton real ale. Then last week Howard Wadsworth brought his XT 500 down for the NUM knees up, I mean conference, at Torquay. This was certainly the most well used XT I have seen and bears testimony to Crasher's record of having travelled further sideways and upside down than vertical. I don't know if Yorkshire is anywhere near Texas as they must both be the other side of Newton Abbot, but from the tales of the Dales expounded by the stalwart Howard, things are mighty tough up north. We went out together one evening to sample the local UCR's and the best of them was an overgrown horror which saw us driving blind through a tunnel of brambles, cow parsley and ferns. From the air we would have been invisible. The ground rose to greet me on one occasion and it was a job to clear the brambles from the bars, especially those black plastic covered ones.

Devon General Review: Claims have been lodged with Devon C.C. to up-grade most of the RUPP's lost in the Limited Review. Old map and use evidence are very good in all cases, but this question of 'suitability' as seen by non-trail riders is not nice.

Somerset Limited Review: Position not good here. Hardly a Byway to be seen out of some of the longest and most numerous RUPP's in England. However, Fred Furlong and others will be lodging formal objections to the C.C.'s proposals, and if other riders will just write in objecting to the disregard of their rights, it may do some good (see Howick/Boulmer case in June Bulletin) and they will sleep easier at night having done their bit against the bureaucratic dragon.

Cornwall: It is known that the Cornish are an independent lot, but they really should open diplomatic relations with the mainland.

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EAST MIDLANDS: Rep - Richard Marshall, 1 Burlington Close, Breaston, Derby. Tel: Draycott 3416.

In the continuing saga of the Nottinghamshire Limited Special Review, we have now won a major concession from N.C.C. After threatening them with the Local Ombudsman they agreed to have a meeting with us to discuss our grievances. We explained how they had totally ignored DOE Circular 44/68 by not consulting before publication and that they had ignored all evidence of vehicular use. We reasoned that where conclusive evidence of past vehicular use was available, i.e. 1929 Local Government Act maps or Enclosure Award, then the status must be 'Byway', as the 1968 Countryside Act did not give the council power to extinguish vehicular rights. This point was conceded by the N.C.C. and they have agreed to re-investigate our 60 claims and let the DOE and ourselves have details of any changes.

Discussions with Leicestershire C.C. are still taking place over the closure of Allextion Lane, as they are reconsidering what action to take in view of our objections. Anyone who has ridden this lane and not yet completed an 'evidence of use' form please contact me for one, as they will be needed if it gets to court.

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# BRIAN THOMPSON'S R.O.W. BIT

In the Leek area of Staffordshire 20 green lanes have been closed following four days of public enquiries in October 1977. The inspector, Mr. W. Liddell-Hann, has rejected all our claims for byway status fought for by Mike Rowley and riders from the Manchester, Derby and Stoke clubs. The inspector admits in his report that all the lanes had proven vehicular rights, but said that trail motorcycles are not a normal type of machine and evidence of use and pleas of hardship from riders are rejected.

Better news from the Government-ordered green lane study. This 4-month study being carried out by the independent research trust 'DART' has now started. Their researcher, Miss Fiona Leney, has been to see me and says that we know more about green lanes than anyone else and sees no harm at all in trail riding. Counties for study as an example of the UK will be the three D's - Devon, Dorset and Derbyshire. Devon will be first and three surveyors will be there in August for two weeks, then the final two weeks of August in Dorset. In September three weeks will be spent in Derbyshire's High Peak looking at green lanes, meeting riders' representatives, ramblers, Peak Park officials and county council staff.

The main object of the exercise is to see if allegations by the ramblers of conflict are true. At the end of the survey a report will be made to the government recommending changes in the law affecting green lanes. On one aspect of the survey we do agree with the ramblers - many lanes have been ploughed and the authorities do nothing about it. We appeal to riders to keep a low profile for the periods of survey and stop any riders seen misbehaving.

There has been some conflict in the Peak District in the past (riding off the track, riding too fast, etc.) so don't let them find any evidence that will be used against us. Devon and Dorset are not a worry as there is little trail activity at present, but Derbyshire is a different matter.

On a fine Sunday trail riders from Manchester, Sheffield and the Midlands can be seen in increasing numbers, often using the same lanes as hundreds of walkers.

One county that actually welcomes trail riders is South Yorkshire. At a meeting in Barnsley with officials they said trail riders should have somewhere to ride and they would oppose all closure attempts. They also promise to prosecute any farmers who plough up a green road. So refreshing to meet a county where trail riders are treated with respect and whose needs are catered for along with other countryside users.

The ramblers are behind most of the large scale lane closures such as in Somerset. But I do know that our handful of workers are better trained and of a higher calibre than the average R.A. officer. The R.A. are also fighting on three fronts at once: footpaths, bridleways and byways. Their enemies are the horse riders, motorcyclists and incredibly, the most harmless of all, the cyclists. It might be a good idea for some of us to gain experience and join the R.A. local group. Don't tell them your real interest though or they will show you the door.

It was the two years as Doncaster area Footpaths Officer during 1974/75 that taught me most about RoW. I am still good friends with the present Footpaths Officer, though to the rest I am the new Dracula and they have suggested that I apply for the vacancy as County FP Officer which would put me out of permanent use as a TRF fighter! Another £2,000. a year would be nice and I could then afford a decent trail bike. But my wife does not wish to move!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

39 Warren Road,  
Thorne, Doncaster.

Dear Nick,

I was most concerned when several grass roots members indicated that they thought the Executive Committee was split and lacked solidarity. This image has been brought about through the many bitter letters in the Bulletin over a long period, all directed at Mr. Plummer and calling for his resignation (not the Editor's fault). One member (a lady) indicated that she would be interested in having a go at the job left vacant when Miss Price had to resign, but in view of the disarray is unwilling to do so. I explained that, with the exception of Pete Plummer, we have a united, strong team, all working very hard for the TRF.

I will remind anyone else who thinks, perhaps not unreasonably, we are at one another's throats, that as a founder member I have seen many officials come and go. We now have (with one exception) the best team ever, and are all set for long running continuity, essential for strength and growth. Committee meetings are usually cordial.

Brian Thompson.

(No more letters about Pete Plummer will be printed in the Bulletin. If there is a problem it must be sorted out by the Executive Committee and not by airing it here - Nick.)

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14 Rycroft Close,  
Woodley, Berks.

Dear Nick,

As a TRF member of both Thames Valley and South Midland Groups for some years and eager reader of your excellent production of our magazine, I am wholeheartedly sickened by the hardy perennial wrangling regarding facilities and title provided by this club.

Over the years the subjects have been discussed at all levels, private and public; the consensus then and now is firmly that any association with "speedy, noisy competition riding" will only do our cause much harm when challenging the horse and foot brigade, conservationists and the like - we have enough problems with individual residents and landowners now! If riders wish to compete, our subs are minimal so that they could well afford membership to sporting clubs as well. (It is often necessary for entries anyway.)

On the other subject: after producing stickers, headed paper and magazine cover, getting local and national council and press tolerance/acceptance/goodwill - what better way to waste our restricted funds than by changing the title of the fellowship. We are (at least in the Thames Valley) a united fellowship with common aims - to preserve our rights and enjoy riding together. I am proud to belong to a FELLOWSHIP.

A few years back an attempt was made to collate ideas on name, motif, mag form, etc., and from the total membership in the 100's, the then Editor was swamped with three or four usable suggestions. For the most of us then and now the message was: Leave Well Alone - we are the piper and happy as we are!

On a more recent subject, the last Bulletin carried a statement by Brian Thompson regarding enduros. No-one could deny the tremendous work he has done for Rights of Way generally and certainly his talents should be for the common good - not exclusive to any group. Neither should we deny his right to a complete about-face regarding competitive affiliation, but by the same token he should make publicly quite clear that when representing the TRF - a non-competitive club - that that is our policy, and not express a private opinion.

The TRF has finally established itself as a respectable body with a voice of sincerity - let's not spoil it now.



My own dealings with local council officials have shown me beyond doubt that mentioning the TRF means more co-operation and courtesy than is shown to an individual.

If the subject is to be on the agenda for the next A.G.M., the only way of stopping it is to attend and vote against it, not bleat later. If general opinion is sought beforehand, a census fairly conducted would save A.G.M. time.

If an enduro section is formed it will have to be totally self-supporting, with open accounts, and not a further drain on funds.

Colin M. Patient.

\* \* \* \* \*

21 Woodfoot Road,  
Rotherham,  
Yorkshire.

Dear Nick,

Here I am, sitting indoors, penning my first ever letter to the venerable TRF mag. It must be the home brew reaching parts other beers cannot.

Anyway, to continue, I went on Brian Thompson's Derbyshire evening run (very enjoyable, Brian - thanks very much), and it dawned on me (got home late, see) that within each Group very few machines are duplicated. Take for a minute the classic case of the XT 500 owner - if he drops the bike on the right hand side, it won't start again. So he gets to his monthly meeting, run or what have you, voices his problems to all and sundry and ..... zero. No one else there has an XT (no snide comments, please). But if all the TRF members in the country were to meet, our hero would probably find a solution. Get the drift yet?

Now, it is totally impractical for us all to meet in the flesh, but if all the information were to be gathered centrally, it could be edited and printed in the TRF mag.

I would like to offer myself as a library for such information and suggest XT 500's as a start because they must be one of the more popular bikes on the TRF front. If successful, the venture could be thrown open for all makes, for general items such as tyres, sprockets, etc., where to buy or where not to buy.

OK XT owners, the ball is in your court. Any information (constructive please) on problems, solutions if you know them, change of gearing, brighter lighting, general tips, ideas, anything. Even if your bike is bog standard, totally reliable and you do not get the aforementioned problem - WRITE. I will edit it and send it for publication in the mag.

That's it, I'll do my bit, but I need your letters, 7p. stamp quite acceptable. Must go now, the home brew is starting to reach other parts.

Note for Real Ale Connoisseurs - Cordon Brew, Sheffield Market, 5p. per pint.

John Shearer.

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#### MUD - or - WHY I ALMOST BOUGHT A TRAIL BIKE.

(By Ian Thompson.)

I am not easily persuaded, but I feel that I am now almost convinced that the best time to go trail riding on a road bike is not the middle of a very muddy February. All you 'serious' trail riders on your 'real' bikes will shake your heads and comment on my foolishness. How could anyone with a number of years experience of trail riding still prefer a road bike on the rough?

The source of my perversion can be traced back to some 10-years ago when I first became interested in green roads.



Deciding that a Velocette Venom was not ideal, I took out my venerable NSU Quickly and had a tremendous time bouncing and slithering along a smooth, flat road in Cambridgeshire! Ever since then I have used road bikes on the rough and thoroughly enjoyed myself - until this February produced some problems.

Mervyn Repper has been systematically riding all the Rights of Way in the Bristol area over the last few years. He has covered most of the County of Avon and is now looking at North Somerset. Paul Saunder and I agreed to go with him to explore a series of RUPP's I had put together as an interesting route - on paper at least. Unfortunately, the weather turned against us. We were forced to postpone our trip for a week after the worst snow in the West Country for 30 years. Some of you may have heard of this (the snow, that is.)

Following the snow, it rained. The first lane we investigated showed signs of the thaw. Instead of being the narrow, muddy track I remembered, it was a wide, fast-flowing, rocky stream, fed by rain and melting snow from a large part of the Mendips. Great fun!

We next followed the old coach road over Churchill Batch, now replaced by the present A38 which was blasted out of the hillside in the 1820's. The old road is still in good condition and I often use it on my way to work. Then we headed south towards Wedmore and the marshlands where King Alfred met the Danes. This area is known locally as 'The Moor', though it resembles the fens of East Anglia rather than the high, heather covered plateau usually thought of as a moor.

We followed one road along the dead straight, man-made bank of the River Axe, flowing fast and muddy towards the Bristol Channel. We then found a lane which we hoped would lead us to Blackford on the road to Wedmore. At the start of the lane we saw a local who smiled as we passed. We discovered why! The track was narrow and unused by vehicles, and we had to stop to remove several young trees blown down by the winter gales.

However, that and the odd snowdrift merely added colour to the main problem; the ground was so wet that even Mervyn's DT 175 trail bike had trouble finding grip. Paul and I on our road bikes were reduced to pushing, footing and wild wheelspin. Then the road disappeared! We were confronted with a series of well maintained stiles and no gates. We found a way round and back on to our road through a hedge and a ditch - real one day trials stuff!

Then it got really muddy. What with bouncing over the rough ground and the mud preventing our wheels from turning, we arrived, after much pushing and shoving, at Blackford, to the evident astonishment and distrust of two elderly inhabitants who came to the door of their cottage to watch us. I agreed with the old gentleman that it was indeed a bit muddy and we both grinned.

The following weekend Mervyn and I set out to complete the route. We failed. After the previous weeks rain, the ground had been drying out. Instead of being runny and wet, the mud was now the consistency of putty and stuck to wheels, boots, gloves, everything, like glue. Mervyn made it through one lane with much wheelspin and determined riding, but my YR5 could hardly move. Mervyn parked his bike and came back to help. With the two of us pushing and much clutch slipping we made it through the stickiest part, stopping every 10-yds. (!) to clear mud from the wheels, which would not turn round. Then we discovered the clutch had burnt out.

Watched by two little boys from the cottages at the end of the lane, (It's always worse when someone is watching) we proceeded to drag the silent heap of mud that had once been a perfectly good road bike to the end of the lane. It took 45-minutes to cover about 200-yds. Mervyn produced a tow rope and towed me home.

Perhaps under certain circumstances a trail bike does have advantages. I am still not entirely convinced.

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TRAILING IN THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND - by Gerry Gooch.

I was rather ashamed of the small tear in my jeans just over my left knee. As John Dowling lowered himself on to my G-Plan couch I looked him up and down; at a quick glance I counted six tears, and that was not taking into account his zip fly, which was showing signs of excessive use. (He is not a heavy drinker, but he is getting married on July 15th!)

However, who cares what your trousers are like when you are just setting off for the day to Dave Taylor's Trail Park in Swanscombe, North Kent. A dozen or so members from the Thames Valley Group had decided to sample the delights of the Park, and delightful it was too. The average trail rider can learn a lot by tackling the same hazard a number of times. How often have you come across a tree trunk on a lane and wondered whether to go over or around it? At Dave's Park you have a selection of trunks to tackle. (A number of riders seemed to be very happy using them as see-saws.)

It was a sunny day and the circuit was 99% dry. Mike Pontin sampled the 1% of water and promptly turned a somersault into the murky depths. The day was made more enjoyable by being able to chat to friends and watch others making their way around the circuit. Bikes were exchanged and notes compared. I think we all agreed that the best sounding machine was Dave Rickard's well turned out Cheney Triumph. Children and girl friends joined in too; my Yamaha TY 80 was in popular demand amongst the kids on the second of the three circuits at the Park.

The price for a days riding has just gone up to £2.50., which may at first seem a lot, but when you think that there were half a dozen staff to be paid and the land purchased in the first place, it isn't too bad, is it?

I found that to ride for 10 - 15 minutes at a time was enough for me, but remember that I ride a bulky great beautiful XT 500.

Those of you with lightweights may well ride for much longer, but I am sure you will not have as much fun as I had! Many thanks to Dave Taylor for providing us with a super way to spend £2.50.

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RUN REPORTS

CHESHIRE RUN - March 5th, 1978.

We met at Chapel-en-le-Frith and continued on towards Dove Holes, taking in one or two lanes on the way. On then to Priestcliffe and towards Monsal Dale. At Upperdale a couple of us crossed by the ford, after first testing that it was second stud up on a short leg Barbour suit. Then on to lunch at Monsal Head, but such fantastic progress was made that we were an hour early (Ian Driver take note) for opening time. As we waited we took in Littonslack which, as usual, gave one or two quite a struggle. Opening time came and we carried on to Wordlow Mires for lunch.

After this short break we carried on to Edensor and Bakewell and surrounding lanes, then on to Pilsbury which, after fording the river, took a considerable amount of climbing. While waiting at the top of the climb, Dave Eaton, completely on his own, mountaineered a 3-ft. high snow drift and declared himself to be the tallest, handsomest midget in Northwich.

Then on to the last lane - Tenterhill, where we met a farmer putting up a sign saying 'Private Road - Public Footpath'. On interrogating him we found out that the local Council had told him to put it there. As this road went to his farm other people were not to use it without first asking him, and that if he continued to let people use this lane (as he has done for years) they would take it over and possibly tarmac it or something? Perhaps Brian Thompson could put us straight on this one.

A good day was had by all, the Prince married the Princess, and everyone lived happily ever after.

Peter Lockwood.

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THAMES VALLEY RUN - March 19th, 1978.

Sunday, 19th March, was a wet, miserable day, as befitted the first day of Summer Time. The weather did not, however, deter 20 hardy trail riders, including several newcomers, from exploring a number of lanes in the Bracknell/Wokingham area of Berkshire.

The first group, led by yours truly, left Wokingham at 10.15 for the first lane in Bracknell. Unfortunately, our furthest travelled rider, Fred Chandler on his 7-speed, 250 Sachs Bitza suffered a puncture before we even reached our first lane. Rather than hold us up Fred said he would join the second group, so we pressed on. The first lane was a fairly easy introduction to the day, but the second, past Jealotts Hill, was rather harder - a mile or more of very greasy mud much churned up by horses. At the end of this lane Dave Phillips on his rather special 305 XL stopped with a broken throttle cable. He was sure he could repair it, so he was also left for the second group.

Our route continued north via some easy lanes through Paley Street to the A4 before turning south through Littlewick Green and on to Waltham St. Lawrence. All these lanes were in superb condition after a week of rain - difficult enough to present a good challenge, but not so bad that bikes were getting bogged down. The next lane took us round the back of a rubbish tip with stagnant water laying across the lane in places - very smelly and definitely not the place to break down. By the end of this lane the paper air filter on Dave Rickard's Greeves had swallowed so much water it no longer passed air, so there was a short delay while this was fixed.

South-west for two more lanes before turning east to cross the M4 and the last lane before lunch. This one was WET. I had the benefit of a recce the week before and knew it was worth keeping as close to the edge of the puddles as possible. Not everyone followed my line and there were a few wet feet at the lunch stop.

Lunch was taken at the popular 'Jolly Farmer' at Shurlock Row and my thanks go to the landlord for supplying trays of rolls especially for us (another benefit from the recce.) The second group arrived at the lunch stop shortly after us, having picked up both our 'casualties' and everybody seemed in high spirits.

After lunch we turned south via three more nicely muddy lanes to cross the A329 heading for Finchampstead. We found the end of the lane at Holme Green blocked with a mound of broken breeze blocks, but this proved only a minor obstacle to the experienced trail riders and, although few actually 'cleaned' it, all got over without too much trouble.

The best line through the ford at Gardeners Green was occupied by an abandoned car, but the water wasn't too deep so we were able to get round it and press on via two wide muddy lanes to Finchampstead. One of the lanes here wound its very narrow way up through trees and rhododendron bushes crossing several ditches with plank bridges to emerge at the Ridges - very nice.

A bit of roadwork brought us to Arborfield Garrison and the problem of a fallen tree. The first couple of bikes were lifted over, then a rusty sheet of corrugated iron was spotted in the bushes and pressed into action as a launching ramp. After a diversion for petrol we returned to the wet lanes round Farley Hill. Another fallen tree had us exercising our muscles again - aren't those 250 Hondas heavy! The end of this group of lanes saw the Greeves finally cry enough and several others departed for home.

A few masochists went on to complete a circuit of lanes round Arborfield before ending up back at Wokingham, tired, wet and very dirty, but what better way to spend a wet Sunday?

My thanks to Ron Rickarby for leading the second group, with Gerry Gooch's help, and again to Ron and Paul Brindley, who helped with the recce run. I enjoyed it, I hope everyone else did.

\* \* \* \* \*

John Collins.



DEVON EXCURSION - March 1978.

The Devon Section March excursion went out to survey and explore mainly unknown UCR's and RUPP's in the Widecombe, Moretonhampstead, Bovey Tracey area of West Dartmoor. This is National Park ground, reportedly haunted by the shades of Lady Sayer and the Dartmoor Preservation Society, but we saw no other users off the tarmac.

The recent heavy snow had brought down loads of trees across nearly all the lanes, so plenty of exercise was taken at regular intervals heaving them aside or snapping off branches to make progress possible. In Houndtor Wood, near Becky Falls, the trail wound through fir forested valleys, whilst up on Bell Tor it was high across open moor, with fine views of the distant ice cream vans and OAP-filled charabancs as portents of summer to come.

Lunch was taken at the Ring o' Bells in North Bovey, where you get a very good help-yourself ploughman's lunch to eat, and it was sunny and warm enough to eat it at the tables outside.

In the second half we followed part of the Torbay Scooter Club's Safari route, which takes in such MCC trials sections as Waterworks, Simms and Old Town Woods, as well as other terrain which must be a real test on 10" wheels. The TSC has been using any suitable lane regardless of status for about eight years without difficulty and are very keen.

The run started and finished at Haytor Rock and after an excellent sunny day we rode home to plan further treks over Dartmoor's peaty passes; the wildest, touchiest trails must still be in the future around Okehampton's southern reaches.

Geoff Burt.

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SOUTHERNERS IN YORKSHIRE - APRIL 1st/2nd, 1978.

Easter is traditionally the time for certain Thames Valley Group members' thoughts to turn to Wales, there to meet with several Cambridge Matchless Club members for a long trail riding weekend.

However, this year things changed slightly. Dave Tucker, a fellow founder member of the South East Group, suggested that we go to Yorkshire. "I've been in touch with Howard Wadsworth, leave all the arrangements to me" said Dave with an air of finality. That settled it; with Dave and Howard making all the arrangements for a weekend in the North, riding with the Yorkshire lads - can't be bad. After finalising our own 'get up there' plans (about three times over, I think) the journey up the A1 on the Friday was uneventful, apart from a case of sexual assault when Dave met us during a tiffin stop.

The place Howard had recommended was the Crossbanks Grill, where we were made very welcome, the proprietor moving his car out of the garage to allow us to stable with his own 8-valve Yamaha. Friday evening saw us around a large fire in the farmhouse that the Yorkshire lads had renovated, chatting about things TRF. Saturday at 10 was the meeting time and, sure enough, our hosts arrived, muttering something about "Don't mind the clouds and mist, it only means heavy rain!"

The day was spent on a variety of going, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the visitors, especially when we realised that drainage ditches do not have bridges and must be jumped. At Howard's request we checked out a few lanes after we had parted for the day and arrived back at the Crossbanks wet through, but very happy. Saturday evening created a new record for the 'Persons Fitted Into a Snug Bar' contest, during which we learned from Brian Thompson that tomorrow was bound to include the finest lanes in Yorkshire.



Sunday dawned and - surprise, surprise - no rain! It was our turn to meet our host group at their farm, then followed a great mornings' ride, finishing along the Great Wold track at Ribblesdale Head.

The Yorkshire lads had to leave then to get back for work on Monday, but we enjoyed a fine snack while watching the RAF mountain rescue helicopter unit training. The rest of the day was spent on the Pennine Way, Stalking Busk and a final run back along Highway. All in all, a really great weekend in the finest of company, beautifully led by Howard and Brian Thompson, and very much appreciated by myself, Dave Tucker, Colin Fern and Nick Walker.

Two thoughts occur to me, looking back:

Ever more evidence that the Ramblers Association hierarchy are not representative of the people we meet on these tracks, who are most friendly and interested - offering, on more than one occasion, to close gates to save us dismounting.

How on earth does Brian Thompson manage to ride downhill, one-handed, and still stay on? Try it sometime!

Brian Crook.

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(Howard Wadsworth's side of the Yorkshire weekend will appear next month. - Nick.)

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ADVERTISEMENTS (Free to members)

FOR SALE: Yamaha DT 175. 'P' registered, taxed for 12 months, 7,000-miles, knobbles, air forks, Preston Petty's, compression release, Girling shocks, Renthals, recent re-bore and new chain and sprockets. £295. Ron Smithson, Tel: St. Albans 52376.

FOR SALE: Yamaha XT 500. 'S' registered, 1977 model, less than 3,000-miles, lightened for trail use, Renthal bars, plastic rear mudguard, Mudder type front guard, rubber number plate and small light, mudflaps, fork boots and protectors, tank cover and new chain. All original equipment supplied. £690. Ken Leary, Tel: Potters Bar (Herts) 51932.

FOR SALE: Triumph Adventurer spares! Preston Petty goodies, Dunlop products (trials wellies and tyres), and Girling spares - all at discount to members. Chris Buckle, Roebuck Motorcycles, 80 High Street, Acton, London, W.3. Tel: 01-993 1164.

WANTED: Villiers 250 round barrel engine. Geoff Burt, Tel: 0803 558093.

WANTED: BMC Mini towing bracket and 50 mm. ball. Ken Leary, Tel: Potters Bar 51932.

LOST: Green cloth bag containing tyre levers, spanners, Finilec, etc. Somewhere north of Ermine Street (or on Old Bourne), Hertfordshire. If found please contact Dave Phillips, Marlow 3012.

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